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**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

## SUCCESS STORY

# New Outlook to Labor and Delivery

**Evidence-based methods lead to more patient and family-oriented medical care in Kyrgyzstan.**



A mother helps her daughter through labor and delivery in Issyk Kul Oblast, Kyrgyzstan  
Photo: ZdravPlus

***USAID's ZdravPlus project helps health care providers in Kyrgyzstan change their outlook to labor in delivery.***

Today in Issyk-Kul Oblast in Kyrgyzstan, women are experiencing a new, more family-focused approach to labor and delivery. Giving birth with a partner present, in a room without other patients, and with the freedom to move around during labor and choose the most comfortable delivery position has made labor and delivery both safer and more pleasant. After delivery, breastfeeding and skin-to-skin contact are emphasized, babies room in with their mothers, and visitors are encouraged. These positive changes were introduced with support from USAID's ZdravPlus project, which trained hospital-level health care providers from Cholpon-Ata, Balykchy, and Karakol maternity hospitals in Issyk-Kul Oblast in WHO-recommended safe motherhood practices. The training encouraged health care workers to look at pregnancy and labor not as medical conditions but as natural processes in which women and families should be supported in making decisions that are right for them.

Participants learned about postpartum and newborn care, as well as acquired a variety of concrete tools that help the provider monitor labor and delivery. In addition, the participants spent one week in the maternity hospital with the WHO expert trainers, getting hands-on experience. Many of the trainees admit that they were skeptical that such methods would be beneficial. However, after putting these new practices into use with women giving birth in the Karakol Maternity hospital, these gynecologists, neonatologists, nurses, and midwives came to embrace the new practices as their own.

Patients have also been pleased with the new approach. As one new grandmother in Cholpan-Ata noted, "Years ago, I gave birth on a table without a partner and it was scary. But now we are very happy – my daughter just gave birth and I was able to be with her through the whole process. She could eat and drink and gave birth in the position that she wanted. And the doctor, a young woman, was very nice and helpful."

Follow-up visits at the Issyk Kul maternity hospitals revealed continued enthusiasm and commitment to the new Safe Motherhood methods. In Balykchi, the trained providers were not only implementing the new practices in their maternity hospital, they had also taken the initiative to hold a brief training for local PHC providers on their own.